

5. PLANNING PROCESS



Overview

The nine-month planning process for Kennedy Street was initiated by the Office of Planning in March 2007 in partnership with neighborhood residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders focused on improving the corridor's economic vitality and overall physical quality. What eventually became the Kennedy Street Revitalization Plan was the end-product of an intensive series of discussions, meetings, and

workshops that began with a series of informal “open houses” with local residents, business-people, and community and institutional leaders, as well as with representatives from numerous City agencies.

As described in the following pages, the study's Advisory Committee played a significant role in shaping both the planning process and the Plan's ultimate outcomes, including its underlying Vision and set of goals, and its recommendations. The Committee's work linked directly to the public meetings, which served as community-wide opportunities to evaluate, comment on, and further refine the Plan's elements as they evolved. Of particular note is the emphasis placed by both the Committee and the community as a whole on the need for code enforcement and overall safety along the corridor as an absolutely essential series of early-action steps toward the corridor's revitalization. There was also close congruence between the Committee and the community on the need for collaborative advocacy to help ensure the Plan's implementation upon its completion and approval.

What follows is a more detailed review of the various steps taken during the planning process: steps that eventually led to a community-based Vision and accompanying set of goals for Kennedy Street.

Role of the Advisory Committee During the Planning Process

A wide-ranging cross-section of residents, business proprietors, property owners, and community leaders served as a volunteer Advisory Committee for the Kennedy Street planning process, charged with ensuring that the final Plan, and its implementation, would truly reflect the community's wishes and ambitions. At a point mid-way through the process, the Committee's membership expanded to include additional residents and other stakeholders.

Key to the success of the process was the Com-

mittee's charge to serve as a conduit between the community at large and the planning team, to evaluate the priorities and strategies identified by the community, and, ultimately, to help develop plan recommendations.

From the earliest stages, the Committee played a critical role in shaping the process and recommendations that emerged over the course of the seven months. In April, the Committee and the planning team helped formulate a core set of guidelines that would frame the planning team's ongoing work. These guidelines included:

- Maintaining neighborhood scale development
- Creating a neighborhood-serving corridor and pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- Expanding neighborhood-focused retail options while increasing safety
- Identifying opportunities for storefront and sidewalk improvements
- Addressing parking issues
- Ensuring an inclusive process that involves residents, business and property owners, and youth in creating an advocating for the plan
- Determining the applicability of – and potential links between – an array of City-sponsored programs to Kennedy Street's revitalization

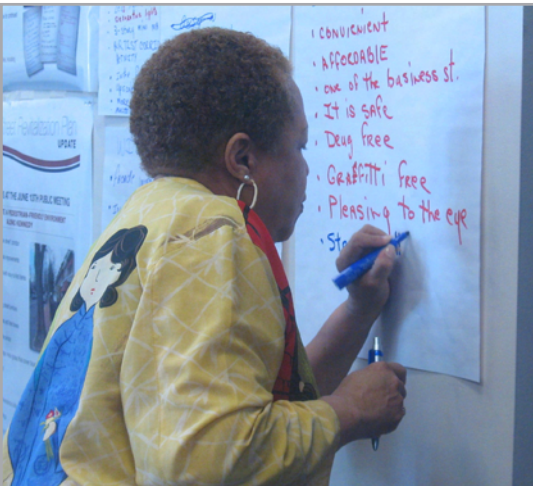


At the August 9 meeting, the Advisory Committee discussed the draft Vision Statement that emerged from the previous month's Community Workshop.

PUBLIC PROCESS SCHEDULE

Meetings with the community and Advisory Committee, as well as with representatives from City agencies, began the week of March 12 with a series of neighborhood-focused open houses and discussions with City agency partners. The meeting schedule continued as follows:

- AGENCY PARTNERS: April 3
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE: April 25
- KICK-OFF COMMUNITY MEETING: June 13
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE: July 12
- COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: July 21
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY WALK-THROUGH: August 9-10
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE: September 6
- AGENCY PARTNERS: September 28
- COMMUNITY MEETING: September 29
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE: October 11
- COMMUNITY MEETING: October 25
- ADVISORY COMMITTEE: December 13
- FINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: January 31, 2008
- MAYOR'S PUBLIC HEARING: March 13, 2008



The Advisory Committee's Work During the Planning Process

A follow-up Committee meeting focused on incorporating these guidelines into the structure of a community-wide workshop, held on July 21. With nearly 100 people participating, this was a central event in the planning process, designed to enable community members dig more deeply into the corridor's challenges and opportunities, and to identify where and how the major revitalization guidelines could be applied. Using a variety of media and materials – maps, photographs, flip charts, worksheets, examples from other places – participants in six small groups illustrated where they envisioned improvements or new development, how those improvements might be sustained, and which were of the highest priority. Members of the Advisory Committee served as co-facilitators of the small group discussions. All six groups emphasized the need for a cleaner, safer Kennedy Street as a baseline upon which this corridor is to be revitalized. Key recommendations from the groups included:

- "Opening up" the street's businesses with windows that allow pedestrians to see in and shoppers to see out
- Increased cleanliness and safety through improved enforcement of city codes and delivery of city services such as trash pick-up

At the Community Workshop, participants reviewed posters showing examples from other neighborhoods of physical revitalization that might serve as appropriate models for Kennedy Street. During the Workshop's mapping exercise, each group reached consensus on the desired critical locations for change, and the nature of that change, and then reported back on the results of their discussions.

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- Clearly-marked crosswalks, improved sidewalks, and improved traffic signals
- Programs for youth, as well as for seniors, as major factors contributing to, and sustaining positive change
- Increasing Kennedy Street's desirability as the location for new, neighborhood-focused retail – grocery, bakery, hardware store – that will serve both existing and new residents

At the same time, certain critical points along the corridor were seen as places where change would have significant positive impact. Most often cited was the intersection of 5th and Kennedy, which was seen as a neighborhood “hub,” and which currently features stops for two major bus routes. Suggestions for improvement at this site included the creation of a new park or open space, a café or restaurant with outdoor seating, a police sub-station, a youth center, or a farmer’s market.

Participants also identified Kennedy Street between 1st and 3rd as the possible location for many of the uses described for 5th and Kennedy. These de facto hubs possess unique characteristics that, in the future, could be a catalyst for enhancing Kennedy Street’s sense of place.

The Missouri/Kansas/Kennedy intersection was also identified as an opportunity site, in part because of the need for improved pedestrian, and vehicular, safety. The provision of additional green space was seen as enhancing not only the safety but the aesthetics of that part of the corridor.

Other sites identified for new open space include the intersection of Georgia and Kennedy, and the intersection of Kennedy and N. Capitol.

The Community Workshop as the Central Event of the Planning Process

Following are the summaries of the work of the small groups, with highlights from their illustrated maps. In the case of Groups 1, 2, and 3, participants assigned priorities to their recommendations and ideas; any item that received two or more “votes” is included in the summary of the work of each of those groups.

GROUP 1 From maps



- From N. Capitol to Kansas/Missouri intersection
 - > Farmer’s market



Crosswalks that are highly visible and well maintained make pedestrians feel welcome and safe.

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- Overall:
 - > Opportunities for new green space
 - > Better crosswalks
 - > Improved pedestrian safety via signalization at intersections

From flip-charts

New neighborhood amenities

- Community garden – green space
- Farmer's market
- Sit-down restaurants
- Improved sidewalk treatments

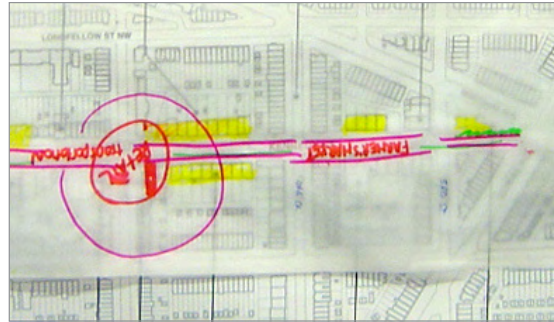
Improved physical, social, and economic environment

- Safer, cleaner environment without displacement
- Visual improvement of all properties
- No more liquor stores
- Improved pedestrian signalization at crosswalks

GROUP 2

From maps

- From N. Capitol to Kansas/Missouri intersection
 - > Arts
 - > Public services
 - > Park/green space at Kansas/Missouri intersection



From flip-charts

New neighborhood amenities

- Bike racks
- Grant money to plant flowers, beautify
- Historic points/information
- Multi-cultural options
- Black-owned businesses
- Recreational activities for youth
- Kennedy Street as a destination (advertising)

Improved physical, social, and economic environment

- Making businesses clean/open/viewable from street; changing facades
- Affordable housing/mixed housing options
- Improved policing and overall public safety
- Sidewalk cleaning, trash can maintenance, overall improvement in delivery of city services
- No higher taxes
- Overall:
 - > Improved streetscape



GROUP 3

From maps

- From N. Capitol to Kansas/Missouri intersection
- > Improved safety at Missouri/Kansas intersection
- From Kansas/Missouri intersection to 8th Street
 - > 5th & Kennedy
 - > Civil Rights Café
 - > Food Festival (between 5th and 8th)
- From 8th Street to Georgia Avenue
 - > Destination restaurant at Wings site
- Overall:
 - > Improved signage



Consistency of sign-band and awnings within the block.

From flip-charts

New neighborhood amenities

- Opportunities for recreation (gyms and health)

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- facilities)
- More places to eat that represent our culture

Improved physical, social, and economic environment

- Tax incentives
- Safety
- Historic preservation/maintain culture and feel
- Safety and comfort indoors and out
- Youth programs and youth involvement
- Reflect full range of residents and businesses

GROUP 4

- From N. Capitol to Kansas/Missouri intersection
 - > Gas station as opportunity site (w/public art)
- From Kansas/Missouri intersection to 8th Street
 - > “Hub” at 5th and Kennedy



- Public park
 - > Public art at 7th and Kennedy
- Overall
 - > Improve bus shelters



GROUP 5

- From Kansas/Missouri intersection to 8th Street
 - > 5th and Kennedy
 - > Farmer's market
 - > Sit-down restaurant
 - > Hardware store
 - > Clearly defined crosswalks
- Overall
 - > Remove boarded-up windows



Outdoor dining areas can add an additional level of activity and vibrancy to a street.



GROUP 6

- From N. Capitol to Kansas/Missouri intersection
 - > Streetscape improvements
 - > Sit-down restaurant
 - > Open space at the gas station
- From Kansas/Missouri intersection to 8th Street
 - > 5th and Kennedy
 - > Open space
 - > Police sub-station
 - > Streetscape improvements
 - > Restaurant
 - > Elimination of crack houses
 - > Between 8th and 9th
 - > Restaurants
 - > Outdoor eating
 - > Park on the old Wings site
- Overall:
 - > Improved streetscape, including better lighting



Storefront engaging both streets and corner.

The Continuing Role of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee continued to work together on strategies to monitor the plan's implementation, with particular emphasis on issues related to economic development, housing, and increased community involvement. Regarding the latter, members of Committee reinforced the goal of “up from the community,” seeking to encourage entrepreneurship and skills development among neighborhood residents, particularly neighborhood youth.

From Public Process to Vision and Goals to Final Recommendations

The July 21 Community Workshop was a critical juncture in Kennedy Street's planning process, and provided much of the content that was then incorporated into a community-wide vision for Kennedy Street's future. As the process moved forward, the vision – and the emerging goals by which the vision would be achieved – was subject to continued discussion and refinement, both at the community-wide level and during meetings with the Advisory Committee.

The vision and goals were also informed by input gleaned from a merchants' survey (*see* page 9.12) as well as from on-going dialogue with other community members and with representatives of City agencies. The latter, which comprised an Agency Partners Group, consisted of representatives from the Department of Transportation, the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and other entities whose initiatives and programs have the potential to play a dramatic role in Kennedy Street's revitalization.

The following chapter presents the Vision Statement, as expressed by and commented on by the community, and a set of supporting goals aimed at making the vision a reality. To achieve those goals, the Plan provides an Implementation Matrix (*see* Chapter 10) pinpointing potential sources of funding in areas ranging from economic development to housing to streetscape improvement.

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